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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0361
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0531
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0138
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0313
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0150
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0111
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 0116
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0315
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0014
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0799
RUEABOL/DIA BOLLING AFB DC PRIORITY
RUCJACC/CENTCOMREAR MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR NULAND BRIEFS NAC ON FOREIGN FIGHTERS
IN IRAQ

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a brief to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on Wednesday, May 7, Ambassador Nuland presented the NAC a Washington produced PowerPoint presentation entitled: "Stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorists into Iraq." Highlighting the fact that foreign fighters account for 90 percent of the suicide attacks in Iraq, with the majority of them transiting through Syria, she underscored the need for Syria to improve its border security and to cooperate more fully with governments in the region. Nuland asked Allies to urge the Syrian government to tighten its visa procedures and for their increased cooperation in the sharing of air passenger information. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Ambassador Nuland informed the NAC that foreign terrorists are responsible for approximately 90 per cent of all suicide attacks in Iraq, and the toll on civilians is devastating. These suicide attacks by foreign terrorists have also occurred in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt, she reported. The Ambassador detailed the sources for the information contained in the presentation, especially the documents seized during a US military raid against Abu Muthanna, the primary al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) officer responsible for receiving foreign terrorists moving from Syria into Iraq.

The Porous Syrian Border

13. (C) The documents obtained in the Muthanna raid indicate that, in the last year, his cell alone facilitated the passage of 800 terrorists from 22 countries into Iraq, 80 percent via Syria. The Ambassador noted that the U.S. estimates that 70-80 percent of foreign terrorists travel to Iraq via the Syria-Iraq border. She pointed out that the Damascus International Airport is used by the majority of foreign fighters transiting through Syria, and that once on the ground, the terrorists cross the border into Iraq using well established smuggling routes.

NATO Allies Can Help Stem The Flow

14. (C) The Ambassador outlined the primary transit routes of the terrorists, (to include points in Europe), and urged PermReps to inform their governments of the serious problem of terrorists transiting through Syria on their way to Iraq. She asked Allies to urge the Government of Syria to take additional measures to stop the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq, including increased vigilance on immigration, returning suspicious travelers to their home country, and tightening visa guidelines for Arabs going to Syria. Nuland continued, Allies themselves must play a bigger role in combating terrorist travel throughout the region, and globally, by cooperating in the sharing of passenger information.

NULAND